

Body Piercing

JANET PROULX

When he was five, my brother was chased by bees
after poking their hive with a stick
ran into the hood ornament of a 1950 Cadillac
pierced a hole in his skull.

A neighbor presented him to my mother
like a sacrificial lamb
kitchen floor stained by blood and tears.

The bane of my childhood
I offered him once to the Fuller Brush Man
in trade for an item in his suitcase.

Finally, there he was
cradled in my father's arms
a gauzy white cap with a stain marking the place
where metal met flesh and bone.

I slipped into his bed and held him close
and as he slept I wept.